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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the use of public schools as tools for community and economic development. As major place-based infrastructure and an integral part of the community fabric, public schools can have a profound impact on the social, economic, and physical character of a neighborhood.Addressing public schools, therefore, is a good point of entry for community-based developers to place their work in a comprehensive community-development context. The paper examines ways in which community-based developers can learn from, as well as contribute to, current community-based efforts, particularly in disinvested urban areas, to reinforce the link between public schools and neighborhoods. Furthermore, the paper considers the policy implications of including public schools in comprehensive development strategies, and asserts that reinforcing the link between public schools and neighborhoods is not only good education policy, but also good community-development policy and practice. An appendix presents contact information for organizations participating in school and community linkages. (Author/SM)

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Using Public Schools as Community-Development Tools: Strategies for Community-Based Developers

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This paper is dedicated to the 35 muses in Ms. Lei's fifth grade class in Brooklyn, New York.

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the use of public schools as tools for community and economic development. As major place-based infrastructure and an integral part of the community fabric, public schools can have a profound impact on the social, economic and physical character of a neighborhood. Addressing public schools, therefore, is a good point of entry for community-based developers to place their work in a comprehensive community-development context. The paper examines ways in which community-based developers can learn from, as well as contribute to, current community-based efforts, particularly in disinvested urban areas, to reinforce the link between public schools and neighborhoods. Furthermore, the paper considers the policy implications of including public schools in comprehensive development strategies, and argues that reinforcing the link between public schools and neighborhoods is not only good education policy, but also good community-development policy and practice.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABOUT THE AUTHOR ii

ABSTRACT iii

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

INTRODUCTION 3

Context 5
The National School-Facilities Crisis 5
Urban Areas Face School-Related Hardships 7

PART I: SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES 8

Exploring the Link Between Public Schools and Neighborhood Quality 8
Public Schools as Marketing Tools 8
Public Schools as Generators of Inequality 9
Unbalanced Community-Related Finance Mechanisms 10
Current Remedies Do Not Address the Link Between School and Community 11
Partners for Comprehensive Community Development 13
Smart Growth and Alternative School Facilities Design Strategies 13
Small-Size Schools 14
Infill Development and Adaptive Reuse 15
Joint-Use Model 16
School and Community Initiatives 16
Education Initiatives 17
Advocacy for School Facility Needs 17

PART II: STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPERS 19

1. Coordinating the Development of Affordable Housing and School Facilities 19
Curbing the Negative Effects of Involuntary Displacement 19
A Strategy for Mixed-Income Development 20
Concentrating Resources 21
2. The Development of School Facilities as a Strategy for Community Development 22
Building Capacity 23
Building Schools Where They Are Needed 24
Learning From Charter Schools 25
Developing Facilities for Future Public School Use 26
3. Using Public Schools as Tools for Economic Development 27
School as Economic Development Drivers 29
Hiring and Investing Locally 29
Work-Force Housing 29

PART III: IMPLEMENTATION 31

Initial Steps 31
School-District Bureaucracy: One Big Hurdle 31
Tapping into Alternative Private and Public Resources 32
Private Resources 332
Public Resources 33

Policy Implications and Recommendations 34
Comprehensive Community Development 34
Incentives for Infill Development 34
More Funding 34
Increased Federal Commitment to Education 35
Implications for Education Policy 35
Recommendations for Further Research 36
Conclusion 37

APPENDIX: CONTACT INFORMATION FOR ORGANIZATIONS PARTICIPATING IN SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY LINKAGES 38

SOURCES 40
Printed Materials (Selected) 40
Internet Resources 42
Organizing Efforts 42
Smart Growth Design, School Facilities 42
Education and School Facilities Funders 43
Academic Research Centers 43
Online Publications 43

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 44

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As integral components of their community fabric, public schools can have a profound influence on the quality of a neighborhood. Concealed by the smokescreen of the bureaucracies of local, state and federal government, as well as school boards and organized labor, is unrealized community capital. The use of public schools as community-development tools can be a point of entry for community-based developers to address the social, economic and physical needs of a neighborhood, as well as to place their current work into a broader, comprehensive community-development context.

In urban areas, where public schools have the highest student mobility rates, the highest teacher turnover rates, the most dilapidated buildings, and the lowest level of academic achievement, community-based developers can use their capacity to create stronger connections between public schools and neighborhoods. Steps to using public schools as community-development tools include developing policies that reinforce the link between public schools and neighborhoods, opening up lines of communication between different stakeholders, and increasing the availability of funding, technical assistance and other resources to facilitate comprehensive community-development strategies. Reinforcing the link between public schools and neighborhoods is not only good education policy, but also good community-development policy and practice.

Part I of this paper looks at the importance of reinforcing the link between public schools and neighborhoods. First, the section considers the interdependent nature of public schools and neighborhood quality, and how for-profit developers use good quality public schools to attract homebuyers. Then the section looks at community-related inequalities in the public school system, and what role community-based developers can play in abating them.

Next the section looks at how community-based developers can contribute to a nascent coalition of community-based organizations that advocates for reinforcing the link between public schools and neighborhoods. First, the section considers the application of smart growth and alternative design strategies, such as small-size and joint-use facilities. Second, the section looks at community-based education initiatives that have formed linkages between public school officials and parent leaders to demand better conditions for public schools.

Part II looks at strategies community-based developers may want to use to include public schools in community development. These strategies offer varying degrees of involvement for community-based developers. The section also includes case studies that highlight each strategy. Strategies include:

- **Coordinating the Development of Affordable Housing and Public Schools**
  Coordinating affordable housing with public-school development can reduce the negative effects of the involuntary displacement of residents. This approach also considers the coordination of affordable housing and public schools as a strategy for mixed-income developments. Furthermore, coordinating schools and housing is a way to concentrate resources to create a market for affordable-housing projects and thus reduce high student mobility rates in troubled schools.

- **Developing Public School Facilities**
  With the capacity and the agenda to develop facilities beyond affordable-housing projects, such as public schools, community-based developers could respond more sensitively to their constituents. Although community-based developers have demonstrated their capacity to develop education-related facilities through charter schools, learning centers and child-care facilities, developing neighborhood-based public schools requires capacity-building, as well

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as technical assistance and the support of funders. This section looks at how community-based developers can create facilities for future public-school use as a strategy to build public schools in disinvested urban areas.

- **Strategies for Community Economic Development**
  Community-based developers can also use public schools as tools for economic development. This section first examines ways to improve the school-to-work transition through economic development. Strategies are discussed to develop programs for both college preparatory and vocational work-force development, and build relationships with local businesses. Then the section considers the role that school districts — as economic drivers and large employers — can play in local economic-development strategies, including the development of work-force housing.

Part III considers initial steps, such as understanding and overcoming the bureaucracy of the public school system and tapping into public and private resources, to facilitate the use of public schools in community-development strategies. Then the section considers the policy implications of using public schools as tools for comprehensive community development.

Methodology: This paper is written for an audience of community-development practitioners. The research contained herein was conducted through a survey of reports, articles and in-person and telephone interviews. All interviews took place between June 10, 2002, and September 6, 2002. The conclusion of this report includes recommendations for further research and a list of selected resources.

INTRODUCTION

> *From the perspective of community development groups, education is the next frontier. For decades, they had found themselves hamstrung by the impenetrable wall around their neighborhood public schools. They could fix housing, revive shopping areas, raise the level of public services, even reduce crime. But the schools — probably the biggest factor in families' decision about whether to remain or flee — were simply beyond the realm of the organized community. Many critics of community development correctly pointed out that, even when community development corporations visibly transformed their communities into livable, attractive places, the middle class sometimes kept moving out.*[1]
>
> — Paul Grogan and Tom Procio, *Comeback Cities*

> *By identifying and acting on synergies between schools and housing — and by leveraging resources available for both — we can achieve a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts for our communities. These partnerships are emblematic of the fact that schools — like housing — are simply one piece of the whole neighborhood fabric.*[2]
>
> — From *Los Angeles Unified School District 2002 Relocation Plan*

The Los Angeles Unified School District recently announced its long-awaited plans to build 85 schools and building extensions by the year 2005. While the plan will deliver badly needed public schools in Los Angeles, where many students are bused to locations far beyond their neighborhoods to attend overcrowded and aging facilities, it will also result in the demolition of 1,000 housing units and the displacement of local businesses and thousands of residents. Ninety percent of those to be displaced are renters with incomes at 80 percent and below area median income. The consequences are harrowing in the midst of skyrocketing rents and the need to build 22,333 housing units in the Los Angeles region by 2005 to meet the current housing shortages.[3]

The case of Los Angeles magnifies the impact that all public schools have on their host neighborhoods, especially in older, urban areas. As one of the largest expenditures on public infrastructure in the country, the impact of public schools cuts across class, race and age boundaries. As neighborhood-based units, they also have a direct impact on communities, influencing property values and the distribution of race and incomes.

The country is currently faced with a national school facilities crisis. In addition to aging school infrastructure, overcrowding, and the need to meet federal mandates for lead-based paint abatement, asbestos removal and American Disabilities Act requirements, there is a need to build more schools to accommodate the growth in the school-age population due to the "Baby Boom Echo."[4] In New York

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[1] Grogan, Paul and Tom Procio. *Comeback Cities: Blueprint for Urban Neighborhood Revival.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000.

[2] Los Angeles Unified School District. *2002 Relocation Plan for the Proposed Priority and Escutia Plan Schools*, Office of Housing Relocation, LAUSD, Dec. 14, 2001.

[3] Ibid., Southern California Association of Governments' numbers.

[4] The Baby Boom Echo is the 25 percent increase in the U.S. birth rate that began in the mid-1970s and peaked in 1990 with the birth of 4.1 million children. From U.S. Department of Education, *A Back to School Report on the Baby Boom Echo: No End in Sight*, August 19, 1999.

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City, the estimated shortfall in classroom space is approximately 100,000 seats. Some of its public schools are operating at over 140 percent of capacity, and most of its 1,000-plus school buildings are more than 50 years old.[5] Urban areas, where most community-based developers currently focus their efforts, are hit the hardest by the school facilities crisis.

In recent years, stakeholders beyond the usual suspects — such as smart growth advocates, designers and community organizers — have taken on education reform as part of their community-improvement strategies. This movement to reinforce the link between public schools and communities has been gaining momentum, but with the virtual absence of community-based developers.[6] While Norman Fructer has noted the increase in their involvement in community-based education initiatives, their work has not fully exploited their potential capacity to address the social, economic and physical needs of a neighborhood.[7]

Using public schools as community-development tools is also a good point of entry for community-based developers to practice comprehensive community development. This new type of community-based developer can respond more sensitively and strategically to the needs of the neighborhood. In recent years, community-based developers have been criticized for being relatively unsuccessful in "moving beyond small businesses and real estate development to communitywide strategic planning." Moreover, Marc Levine writes, "[Community development corporations] have not been successful in linking housing issues with economic development planning, nor have they succeeded in blending traditional community organizing with issues of economic development."[8]

Community-based developers can use public schools as community-development tools to create sustainable communities, develop closer relationships with community-based organizing efforts, and work closely with the city and school boards on comprehensive community-development efforts. This paper considers strategies for community-based developers in using K–12 urban public schools as community-development tools, and their implications.[9] First, the paper explores the link between schools and neighborhood quality, and how community-based developers learn from as well as contribute to current efforts to reinforce the link between schools and neighborhoods. Second, the paper considers specific strategies for community-based developers in using public schools as community-development tools. It is argued that reinforcing the link between public schools and neighborhoods is not only good education policy — an idea that many, including the U.S. Department of Education have endorsed — but also good community-development policy and practice.

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[5] Byron, Exter, Mediratta, "Places to Learn," *Shelterforce*, No. 118, July/August 2001.

[6] Interview with Marc Dohan, Twin Cities CDC. A community-based developer observed at a recent conference hosted by the Communities in Schools coalition that he was one of few (if not the only) community-development corporation representative at the conference. A glance at the list of participants at the *Creating Schools as Centers of the Community* workshop also indicates an absence of community-based developers. Author's observation of list of participants from Concordia, Inc. and the Rural School and Community Trust, *Creating School as Centers of the Community*, a workshop held in New Orleans, LA, June 15–18, 2000.

[7] Fructer, Norman, "Challenging Failing Schools," *Shelterforce*, No. 118, July/August 2001.

[8] Levine, Marc. "The Politics of Partnerships: Urban Redevelopment Since 1945," in Squires, Gregory, ed., *Unequal Partnerships: The Political Economy of Urban Redevelopment in Postwar America*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989, p. 30.

[9] K–12 public schools are place-based and function more on a neighborhood scale. For more information on community and university partnerships, and town-gown relations, see the HUD Office of University Partnerships at www.oup.org, and the Fannie Mae Foundation at www.fanniemaefoundation.org. For information on facilities, also see *School Construction: Sallie Mae Financing Activities*, GAO/HRD-93-61, April 1993.

Context

In the United States, a majority of K–12 schools are public, and a majority of school-age children attend public schools. Furthermore, a majority of school-age children attend public schools in urban areas: 57 percent of public schools are situated in large or midsize cities or their accompanying fringe areas, and account for more than two-thirds (69 percent) of all public-school students. In the 2000–2001 school year, about one in every six students attended school in a large, central city.[10]

Figure 1. Number of Schools, School Districts and Students in Public Education, 2000–01

	Numbers
Public Schools	93,273 [1,993 charter schools]
School Districts	14,514
Number of Students in Public Schools	47.2 million

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *Overview of Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts, School Year 2000-01,* May 2002.

The National School-Facilities Crisis

The need to modernize and rewire buildings for new technology, make repairs to aging infrastructure, build new schools to accommodate the increase in the school-age population, and the lack of resources to properly maintain and bring public schools up to standard conditions have all placed public schools in a state of crisis. Many public schools struggle just to meet federal mandates such as lead-based paint abatement, asbestos removal and ADA requirements,[11] and cannot meet other capital needs as quickly.[12]

- *Aging Infrastructure:* The average age of public-school facilities in the United States is 45 years.[13] In 1999, three out of four public schools across the country reported at least one major building feature in need of repair.[14]

- *Overcrowding and the Need for More Schools:* The jump in birth rate, in addition to rising immigration and recent efforts to expand pre-K programs, have led to an unprecedented pressure on the nation's education system.[15] While the whole country is affected by the population increase, the most growth is projected to occur in the suburbs and in the West. In addition, the need to build more schools is compounded by overcrowding — 25 percent of schools in the U.S. house students above their capacities (ranging from 6 to 25 percent above capacity).[16]

[10] National Center for Education Statistics, National Center for Education Statistics, *Overview of Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts, School Year 2000–01,* May 2002.
[11] *Condition of America's Schools,* GAO/HEHS-95-61, February 1, 1995
[12] Ibid.
[13] National Center for Education Statistics, www.nces.ed.gov.
[14] Ibid.
[15] U.S. Department of Education. *A Back to School Special Report on the Baby Boom Echo: No End in Sight,* August 19, 1999.
[16] *Condition of America's Schools.*

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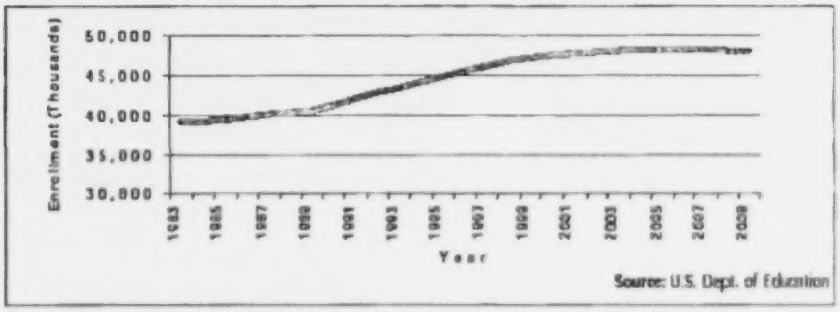
Figure 2. U.S. Public-School Enrollments, 1983 to 2009 (Projected)



Source: Neighborhood Capital Budget Group, *Rebuilding Our Schools Brick by Brick*, Chicago, IL, 1999, p. 64.

- *Spending vs. Need*: Numbers on school construction show the largest investments since the 1950s, indicating that the design and construction industries have been somewhat responsive to the national need to repair as well as to construct new schools.[17] However, the amount spent on capital needs pales in comparison to the amount needed to repair schools, build new schools and meet federal mandates. In addition, the increase in spending does not guarantee that the neediest public schools, in terms of both finances and physical plant, are being served.

Figure 3. School Construction Spending, 2001–2002, Millions of Dollars

	2001 Project Completions	2002 Expected Completions	2002 Project Starts
New Schools	$10.40	$11.25	$10.12
Additions	5.36	5.51	5.85
Renovations	4.57	3.65	4.87
TOTAL	**$20.34**	**$20.42**	**$20.84**

Source: Rubin, Debra, Paul Rosta, Joann Gonchar and Tony Illia, "Lesson Plans Are Being Reworked to Stretch Construction Dollars: Tighter Budgets Push New Approaches for School Space" *Engineering News Record*, enr.com, May 13, 2002.

Figure 4. Estimate of School Capital Needs, 1999

Repairs	$127 billion [$352 billion, according to NEA]
Federal mandates, including lead-based paint abatement, ADA requirements and asbestos removal	$11 billion
TOTAL	**$138 billion**

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, www.nces.ed.gov.

[17] Rubin, Debra, Paul Rosta, Joann Gonchar and Tony Illia, "Lesson Plans are Being Reworked to Stretch Construction Dollars: Tighter Budgets Push New Approaches for School Space" *Engineering News Record*, enr.com, May 13, 2002.

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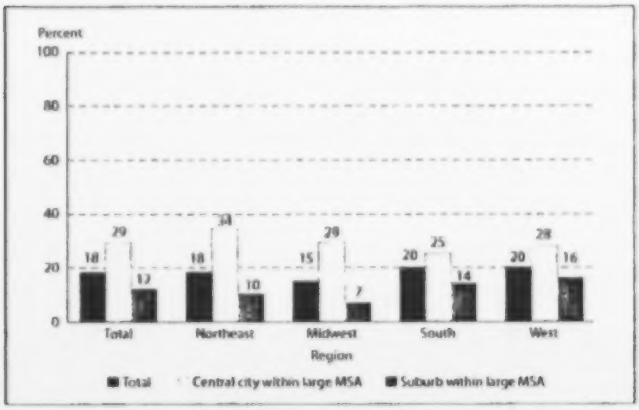
Urban Areas Face School-Related Hardships

Most school-age children who live in poverty reside in urban areas. Furthermore, the public schools they attend have the lowest test scores, most dilapidated physical plant and overcrowded conditions, and the highest student and teacher mobility rates.

Figure 5. Elementary and Secondary Education: Percentage of Related Children Ages 5 to 17 in Poverty, by Urbanism and Region, 1997



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, *Condition of Education 2002*.

- *Urban areas have the highest student mobility rates:* The GAO reported in 1994 that by the end of the third grade, one out of six children had attended three or more schools, and that students often changed schools more than once during the school year.[18]

- *Urban areas have the highest teacher turnover rates:* Central-city schools have the highest teacher turnover rates. There is a need for 2.2 million new teachers to accommodate growth and increasing retirement, 32 percent of whom are needed in high-poverty areas.[19]

- *Urban areas are hit the hardest by the school facilities crisis:* The largest percentages of students attending public schools with at least one unsatisfactory environmental condition are located in central cities, large schools, schools with at least 50 percent minority populations, and schools where at least 70 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches (data for 1996). Furthermore, schools that are more likely to report above-average need to meet federal mandates are in central cities, and consist of minority populations greater than 50 percent.[20]

[18] *Elementary School Children: Many Change Schools Frequently*, GAO/HEHS.
[19] *A Back to School Special Report on the Baby Boom Echo: No End in Sight*.
[20] *School Conditions Vary*, GAO/HEHS-96-103, June 14, 1996.

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PART I: SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES

Exploring the Link Between Public Schools and Neighborhood Quality

Public schools can significantly impact the quality of a neighborhood — affecting everyone from families to empty nesters and people who choose to send their children to private schools. The link between schools and neighborhood quality is often a precarious balance, and when one is trapped in the downward spiral of disinvestment, the other indubitably follows. On the other hand, good public schools have the power to increase property values and to retain and even attract people into neighborhoods.[21] This section explores the nature of the link between public schools and neighborhood quality by considering the influence of public-school quality and the housing market in given areas, as well as community-related causes of inequalities in the public school system.

Public Schools as Marketing Tools

Academics, community-development practitioners and policymakers alike have attributed working- and middle-class flight from inner cities in part to the perceived as well as real decline in urban public school quality. Gary Orfield has argued that "a community cannot develop successfully and hold its population, especially its upwardly mobile families, over the long run if it does not provide a form of education that is good enough to prepare children for college."[22] While test scores and educational quality are what the housing market values most,[23] as architect Steven Bingler has noted, "It's hard to convince anybody that there's good education going on in facilities that are outdated or in disrepair."[24] Decrepit public school facilities, as symbolic of commitment to students, could have a negative impact on student morale.[25] In addition, the condition of the physical plant of a public school can be symbolic of the level of public investment in a neighborhood.[26]

Research by Brasington (1999), Bogart and Cromwell (2000) and Walden (1990) have shown that public-school quality is capitalized into housing prices. Karen Finucan reports that the renovation of the Cleveland Elementary School in Oklahoma City led to an increase of 30 to 100 percent in property values in its surrounding middle-class neighborhood. Brookline and Arlington, two predominantly middle-class Boston suburbs, also experienced increases in property values after the renovation and building of new public schools. Brookline's housing prices rose from $275,000 in 1990 to $520,000 in 1999, and the housing prices in Arlington have risen from $36,000 in 1998 to $295,000 in 2000.[27] While the increase in property values can be attributed to additional factors, Realtors in both communities agree that the renovation and construction of new schools had a major impact on house prices.[28]

With such a powerful draw, it is not surprising that the for-profit real estate and home-building sectors use public schools as marketing tools. Celebration, Florida — Disney's premiere New Urbanist community — markets itself as a quality neighborhood by placing a public school at the

[21] Brasington, p. 1.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Brasington, p. 1.
[24] Finucan, p. 6.
[25] Feldman, Sandra, "No Place to Learn: Kids Deserve schools That Tell Them, 'What You're Doing Here Is Important,'" www.aft.org/stand/previous/1999/0999.html, September 1999.
[26] "Poor Physical Plant Affects Student Achievement, Discipline," *American Teacher,* November 1997.
[27] Finucan, p. 6.
[28] According to Oklahoma City Planning Director Garner Stoll, AICP, in Finucan, p. 6.

center of its community, both physically and conceptually.[29] Developers also realize that it is good business for public schools to be in good condition when their houses first go on sale. The *Los Angeles Times* reports that big builders in Southern California are developing new public school facilities within or proximate to their tracts of housing.[30] School districts in other states have experienced similar offers from big builders to construct public school facilities, even at the risk of not being fully reimbursed by the state.[31] While these public schools are not built with wholly philanthropic intentions, and, by and large, low-income children do not benefit from this type of public-private partnership, the money saved by building one fewer school could potentially mean more money to build another public school. Furthermore, the public schools built by private developers promote a quality of life associated with good schools and healthy communities, such as proximity to schools and well-designed school facilities, and can serve as a model for community-based developers.

The image of a neighborhood's public schools has many implications, including how it can be used as a strategy to retain urban working- and middle-class families who may otherwise leave in search of better public schools for their children. While the phenomenon of attracting families and raising property values occurs primarily in middle-class urban and suburban neighborhoods, community-based developers can leverage the drawing power of public schools to channel resources to inner-city areas.

Public Schools as Generators of Inequality

Healthy learning environments and qualified teachers should in theory be accessible to every child in the United States; however, the unfortunate reality is that the poorest neighborhoods have the lowest performing schools, the highest student mobility rates, the highest teacher turnover rates, and are the most severely overcrowded and most vulnerable to the school facilities crisis. Urban public schools in the U.S. are infamous generators of inequality. Addressing the disparities between public schools requires an understanding of the community-related origins of these inequalities. While the solution to public-school inequality requires interventions that go beyond the scope of the remedies community-development practitioners can and should provide, an understanding of the community-related origins of inequality in schools illuminates where community-based developers can focus their efforts, especially in the context of connecting schools to communities.

This section first addresses the inequalities in school finance. Again, the solution to this problem goes beyond the scope of the capabilities of community-based developers, but is nevertheless illustrative of the inherent relationship between public schools and communities. The section then identifies non-academic barriers to learning, such as the concentration of poverty and housing instability, that add additional burdens to public schools in disinvested urban areas. Finally, the section considers how remedies to address disparities in the public-education system, such as federal compensatory programs, desegregation and magnet schools, can be more effective when coupled with community-development strategies.

[29] Celebration Web site, www.celebrationfl.com.
[30] *Los Angeles Times*, "Blueprint for Public Education. Growth: The developers of Oxnard's Riverpark project agree to build new schools themselves." July 7, 2002.
[31] Finucan, p. 7.

Unbalanced Community-Related Finance Mechanisms

A majority of public schools are financed by local and state bond measures, most of which are funded by property taxes. Low-income neighborhoods are more vulnerable to local bonds, where wealth makes more difference to outcome. The wealthiest neighborhoods are more likely to have public schools that are in better condition and have access to more resources. Schneider and Muir write: "The role of direct democracy in determining education finance is of particular concern…Votes on the creation of structural impediments to tax increases have posed major challenges to education funding."[32] While many polls and studies have shown a general willingness to pay for public school improvements over other infrastructure improvements, such as prisons, the school facilities crisis and the continued lack of faith in urban public schools could eventually result in a decline in voter or taxpayer support.

Urban areas face the greatest hardships, both in terms of school finance and the upkeep of school facilities. Lawrence Picus writes: "There are often more competing demands for property tax resources in urban areas, making it more difficult for big city school districts to garner support for higher school taxes. This 'municipal overburden' is rarely addressed in the distribution of state funds to school districts."[33] Furthermore, with the continued flight of working- and middle-class families, urban public schools may fall victim to demographic changes, so that seniors, professional, childless couples or families who send their children to private schools may not see investment in the neighborhood public school as a fair use of their tax dollars.

Nonacademic Barriers to Learning

Another reason for the disparity in resources for public schools is the presence of nonacademic barriers to learning. In addition to greater competition for property-tax revenues, urban areas are also faced with public schools that incur additional costs, including increased campus security, financial incentives to attract and retain teachers, and services such as health care, nutrition and counseling. With older buildings in older neighborhoods and less money for operating expenses, many school facilities in urban areas are in substandard conditions. The GAO reports that 3.5 percent of an urban school's budget is spent on facilities maintenance; of this amount, 85 percent is used for emergency repairs and only the small remaining amount is spent on preventative maintenance.[34] School financing formulas do not account for these additional community-related costs.

One major nonacademic barrier to learning is the high mobility rates of students in disinvested urban areas. Children constantly moving in and out of school cause disruptions in the classroom, and teachers are often faced with the frustration of dealing with the messy transfer of records. The continual disruption is also highly detrimental to the child. Many studies have shown that high student mobility rates in schools can largely be blamed on housing instability. This is especially problematic for children of migrant farm workers and homeless children, who move quite frequently. However, many students also move due to escalating rents or a lack of affordable housing in the neighborhood. In Dayton's Bluff School in St. Paul, Minnesota, for example, where 93 percent of the children qualify for federal subsidized lunches, an average of 88 percent of the school-age population will typically move in or out during the school year. Chester Hartman writes:

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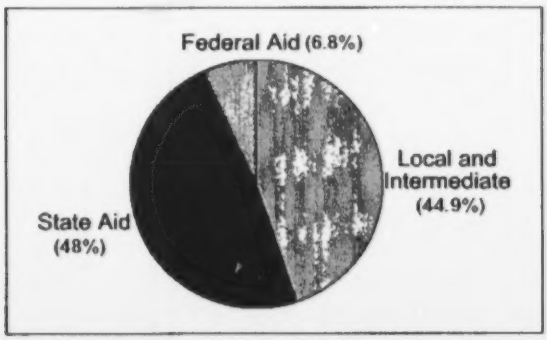
[32] Schneider, Krista and Ed Muir, "Direct Democracy and Education Funding in the States: A Comparative Analysis of Bond Initiatives," American Federation of Teachers Department of Research, March 1997, p. 2.
[33] Picus, p. 720.
[34] *School Conditions Vary*.

> Smaller schools and classrooms, better trained teachers, better buildings and equipment, and other essential improvements can have only a minimal positive impact if the classroom is something of a revolving door, with high proportions of the students leaving and arriving during the school year and from school year to school year.[35]

Current Remedies Do Not Address the Link Between School and Community

To find strategies to address inequalities in public schools, one must look at the community-related causes and combat them with community-related solutions. Federal compensatory programs are designed to bridge the gap created by state and local financing, but they alone cannot remedy the inequalities in public urban schools. One reason is that there is not enough federal funding to go around. The federal government has never provided more than 10 percent of total K–12 education revenues.[36]

Figure 6. Distribution of Revenues for Public Elementary and Secondary Education, 1997–1998



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core Data, "National Public Education Survey," School year 1997–1998. Graph from "Selected Graphics in Education Finance," Education Finance Statistics Center, National Center for Education Statistics.

In 1994, Congress passed the Education Infrastructure Act, appropriating $100 million; however, it was slashed by a legislative act in 1996 due to budget cuts. Qualified Zone Academy Bonds came out of the passage of the 1998 Rangel-Johnson Act, which set aside $25 billion to finance school facilities. According to the Neighborhood Capital Budget Group, however, paying interest on bonds is a limited way to help the poorest public schools, which may not have the financial resources to organize a bond campaign.[37] While the recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act has led to an increase in funding for school facilities, compared to the estimated $127 billion needed to bring schools all over the country to standard conditions, the monetary commitment to address the school-facilities crisis needs a larger and unprecedented federal contribution.

[35] Hartman, p. 227.
[36] Picus and Bryan, p. 444.
[37] Neighborhood Capital Budget Group, conclusion.

Qualified Zone Academy Bonds

A QZAB is a federal incentive tax credit that pays the interest on bonds issued by a city or state to raise money for school renovations. Banks, insurance companies and corporations actively engaged in the business of lending money can receive a tax credit as an incentive to hold these bonds.

A qualified zone academy is a public school (or academic program within a public school) at the secondary level or below that meets certain requirements. It must be located in either an empowerment zone or an enterprise community — or there must be a reasonable expectation when the bonds are issued that at least 35 percent of the school's students will be eligible for free or reduced-cost lunches under the school lunch program, as well as other requirements.

Source: Education Organizing, *School Construction: A National Need,* Issue #2, Center for Community Change, Washington, DC, March 2000.

Federal compensatory programs also fail to address the disparity in public-school finance because funding alone cannot solve community-related problems. Distributing school financing equitably will not in itself solve the problem of inequalities in public schools. Secretary of Education Rod Paige has recently reported that despite a decrease in school-age poverty and an increase in spending in the past decade, test scores have remained static — suggesting that "providing more money isn't the only answer to improving our schools."[38]

Other remedies, such as desegregation and magnet schools, rely on a strategy of disassociating poverty from education. While some examples have shown success in eradicating inequalities in the public school system, these remedies have thrown the baby out with the bathwater by disconnecting schools from communities. As solutions to inequality in public schools, neither desegregation nor magnet schools contribute to a larger community context. Extending desegregation to a community-wide strategy and creating place-based magnet schools can achieve the desired effects of both programs, not only at the school level but also at the neighborhood level.

Desegregation: A program designed to break up concentrations of racial or ethnic groups in attempts to promote equity in access to educational opportunities.

Magnet Schools: Public schools designed to attract different racial or ethnic backgrounds for the purpose of reducing racial isolation, or to provide an academic or social focus on a specific theme (e.g. performing arts).

The U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Housing and Civil Enforcement Section, have developed a voluntary residential integration program called the Schools and Housing Opportunities Initiative to offer community-related remedies, such as housing-counseling programs, down-payment assistance and mortgage-credit programs, to assist school systems in operating desegregated schools.[39] This program can serve as a model for how community-based developers and educators alike can combat community-related disparities in public schools using community solutions.

[38] U.S. Department of Education. "America's Annual Progress Report on Education Provides Mixed Results," Press Release, May 2002, www.ed.gov/PressReleases/05-2002/05312002.html.
[39] U.S. Department of Education, www.usdoj.gov/crt/housing/housing_init.htm.

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Partners for Comprehensive Community Development

Community-based groups, including smart growth advocates, designers and community organizers, have formed a coalition in recent years in reaction to outdated school-design principles, lack of facility maintenance and the so-called temporary solutions of portable classrooms — many of which are now falling apart. They have published several reports that emphasize the importance of reinforcing the link between public schools and neighborhoods,[40] and adhering to the Department of Education's six principles of school facilities design, which state that the learning environment should:

1. enhance teaching and learning, and accommodate the needs of all learners;
2. serve as a center of community;
3. result from a planning and design process involving all stakeholders;
4. provide for health, safety and security;
5. make effective use of all available resources; and
6. allow for flexibility and adaptability to changing needs.[41]

This section examines how community-based developers can learn from these current efforts and be valuable partners in reinforcing the link between public schools and communities. For smart growth advocates and designers, community-based developers are the logical choice for implementing alternative design and planning methodologies, due to their flexibility and focus on local needs. For community organizers, a community developer's knowledge of community capital and real estate development can be a useful organizing tool in demanding accountability for overcrowded and dilapidated public schools. In addition, community-based developers can also add the bricks-and-mortar dimension of community-based education initiatives, such as school facilities, learning centers, etc. Furthermore, community-based developers can place efforts to reinforce the link between schools and neighborhoods into a broader community-development context by offering remedies for nonacademic barriers to learning and by channeling resources into areas with the greatest needs.

Smart Growth and Alternative School Facilities Design Strategies

New and alternative design approaches to school facilities planning are important for community-based developers to consider when using public schools as community-development tools. New design strategies include small-size schools, joint-use facilities, and the adaptive reuse of buildings. These are excellent models that have been shown to be more conducive to learning, better for the environment and more cost-efficient. As a partner, community-based developers can place the importance of smart growth and good design into a broader community-development context. While new design solutions are beneficial to neighborhoods and improve education as well as quality of life, there is no guarantee that these benefits will be shared by all. Community-based developers can also appropriate design solutions to ensure that they benefit lower-income neighborhoods.

[40] Definitive reports include *What If?*, published by New Schools / Better Neighborhoods; *Why Johnny Can't Walk to School*, National Trust for Historic Preservation; *Schools as Centers of Community: A Blueprint for Success*, U.S. Department of Education; and *New Schools in Older Neighborhoods*, Local Government Commission and the National Association of Realtors.

[41] Developed at the Department of Education's definitive symposium on "Schools as Centers of Community" in 1998.

Building Educational Success Together (B.E.S.T) **Scope: Nationwide**	**Coalition for Community Schools** **Scope: Nationwide**
B.E.S.T. is a constituency-building, research and communications collaboration that advocates for better school facilities and emphasizes schools as centers of the community. B.E.S.T. is a project of the 21st Century School Fund, Education Law Center (Newark), the Neighborhood Capital Budget Group (Chicago), KnowledgeWorks Foundation (Cincinnati), National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, and Mark Schneider at New York State University. B.E.S.T. addresses the impact of school facilities on learning as well as on neighborhood quality, and promotes alternative, smart growth strategies in design, including small-size and joint-use facilities. B.E.S.T. asserts that better school buildings can increase the academic success of students, increase schools' ability to attract and retain teachers, and help revitalize neighborhoods.[42]	The Coalition for Community Schools is an alliance of more than 170 organizations in education, family support, youth development, health and human services, community development and government, as well as local and state networks of community schools. The mission of the coalition is to mobilize the assets of schools, families and communities to create a united movement for community schools. Community schools strengthen schools, families and communities so that together they are better able to improve student learning.[43] The CCS defines "community schools" as public schools that are open to students, families and community members before, during and after school throughout the year. Community schools use the community as a resource to engage students in learning and service, and provide health services, adult education and job-training programs.

Small-Size Schools

School districts will not be able to accommodate their need for new schools, especially in older urban neighborhoods where developable land is scarce, if they continue to use the traditional, big-box school design. School districts often use space standards ranging from ten to sixty acres. Consequently, when school districts build new school facilities, they often destroy nearby homes, parks and neighborhoods.[44] *What If?*, a report by New Schools / Better Neighborhoods and the most comprehensive treatise to date on smart growth and school-facilities design, states: "In its haste to get something accomplished, the system can't seem to work smart enough to accomplish an increasingly complex set of needs with a limited quantity of resources."[45] One unfortunate alternative is to build schools in outlying areas, where land is plentiful and cheaper, but which entails bus transportation, massive parking requirements, pollution and disconnection between students and their neighborhoods.

[42] B.E.S.T., *Improving School Buildings/Anchoring Communities* brochure, 21st Century School Fund, p. 2.
[43] Coalition for Community Schools brochure, front cover and p. ix.
[44] Beaumont, p. 3.
[45] *What If?*, p. 10.

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Figure 7. Guidelines Issued by the Council of Education Facility Planners Compared to Examples of Innovative Small Public-School Facilities

Guidelines Issued by the Council of Educational Facility Planners (for every 100 students)		Comparison to Some Examples of Innovative Small Public-School Facilities[46]	
Elementary School	10 acres*	Tenderloin Elementary School, San Francisco, California (325 students)	.73 acres 3 floors Playground on the roof
Middle School	20 acres*	Gozolo and Felicitas Mendez Fundamental Intermediate School, Magnet for grades 5–8 Santa Ana, California (1,240 students)	12 acres 2 floors
High School	30 acres*	Minneapolis Interdistrict Downtown School, K–12 Magnet Minneapolis, Minnesota (450 students)	0.8 acres

*With an additional acre for every additional 100 students.
Source: Phillip Langdon, "Stopping School Sprawl: Some Recipes for Change," *Planning*, May 2000, p. 10.

Studies have shown that small-size schools are better models for learning environments than the traditional big-box structures.[47] At first glance, building small-size schools to cope with overcrowding and the need to accommodate a growing school-age population may seem counterproductive. However, building on smaller or oddly shaped parcels opens up the possibility of building more schools, and speeds up the delivery of new schools.

Small-size schools create a sense of community within the school, as well as beyond the classroom walls. Historic preservation advocates also encourage the rehabilitation of older school buildings, which are smaller and strategically located. Furthermore, small-size schools encourage infill development, which reduces sprawl and pollution from bus transportation and encourages children to walk to school. Less reliance on bus transportation, which can take up a large percentage of a school's operating budget, can free up funds that can be used for better purposes, such as building new schools and paying teachers higher wages.

Infill Development and Adaptive Reuse

The adaptive reuse of buildings, such as old strip malls, abandoned warehouses and other underutilized properties, provides new possibilities for school-facilities design. The use of existing properties prevents the negative disruption of the neighborhood fabric. In urban areas, these properties are situated in central locations, in contrast to outlying areas where students would need to be bused. Furthermore, the recycling of land is also a strategy for neighborhood revitalization and economic development. Underutilized land and property can be regenerated by the presence of a school.

[46] *New Schools, Older Neighborhoods*, last section.
[47] Ibid., p. 17.

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Joint-Use Model

The joint-use model is another strategy that promotes smart growth principles. One approach to joint-use is to provide on-site services such as health care, job training and adult education. Joint-use changes the role of the school in the neighborhood, from an isolated institution for school-age children to a community hub. On-site services that promote intergenerational use, such as a senior center or computer learning center, also give seniors and childless professionals a vested interest in their neighborhood school. Extending the uses of a school facility is important when it can have a bearing on the passing of a local bond measure.

Another type of joint-use model is the sharing of resources. Combining community facilities such as libraries, parks and meeting spaces is a sound community strategy that not only saves money and space, but also unites the public school and neighborhood through shared uses. Restoring the public character of public schools by serving as a community hub encourages members of the community to put their own resources into the school, including volunteer maintenance, mentoring, donations and cultural resources. Moreover, as a community hub, there are more eyes on the school grounds, and thus a greater degree of safety in the school and in the neighborhood.

What Community-Based Developers Can Learn From Smart Growth Advocates and Designers	**How Smart Growth Advocates and Designers Can Benefit From Community-Based Developers**
Small-size schools create closer connections to the community, and studies have shown that they are more conducive to learning. Smaller sizes also open the possibilities of using small or oddly shaped parcels to address community needs.	Community-based developers, as willing, flexible and mission-driven builders, are the perfect vehicle to address smart growth and alternative design strategies in school-facilities planning.
The adaptive reuse of buildings and infill development are cost-effective methods, and may also provide centrally located sites.	Community-based developers are privy to community-development resources that potentially can be used to facilitate alternative design strategies to school facilities planning.
In addition to the social costs of disconnecting children from their neighborhoods, public-school sprawl produces externalities such as pollution and extra costs for bus transportation.	Community-based developers can put smart growth and alternative school facilities into a broader community-development context.
Developing joint-use school facilities is a cost-effective, efficient use of resources. An array of intergenerational uses also gives non–school-age populations a vested interest in their neighborhood public school as a community hub.	Community-based developers can transplant smart growth ideas into poor, urban areas, to ensure that improvement in the quality of the neighborhood is shared by everyone.

School and Community Initiatives

Most organizing efforts for public-school reform are concentrated in urban areas, where many of the most overcrowded and lowest-performing schools are situated. Regardless of location, the one necessary ingredient for a successful school is parental involvement. Empowering parents and residents creates self-sustaining communities, in addition to ensuring more accountability for low-performing schools. Community-based developers can work with community-based organizations that have already established relationships with public-school officials. In disinvested areas, the leadership of community-based organizations and parent leaders has led to significant improvements in many public schools. Community-based developers, often criticized for their detachment from the

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communities they serve, can use schools as a point of entry to return to their roots in empowering residents and creating self-sustaining neighborhoods.

Education Initiatives

Community developers can offer the bricks and mortar for community-based education initiatives, including spaces for youth development programs, learning centers and public school facilities. Community-based developers are also well positioned to ameliorate the nonacademic barriers to learning mentioned in the previous section, such as housing instability. For many longtime community organizing groups, such as the Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in Boston, education initiatives are relatively recent endeavors, but ones that are creating effective mechanisms for accountability in low-performing schools and creating empowered parent leaders who are building relationships with their neighborhood schools. Parent-teacher accountability groups have made strides in organizing for better education standards, and youth development programs have supplemented the lack of resources of low-performing public schools to ensure that students in low-income areas do not get left behind. As these successful organizing efforts are placed in a broader community-development context, education initiatives can become more sustainable.

Neighborhood Capital Budget Group
Strategy: Education Organizing
Chicago, Illinois

The Neighborhood Capital Budget Group offers technical assistance to over 200 organizations in Chicago — comprising community advocacy groups, community-based developers and local school councils — in capital planning, asset-based community planning and leadership development. NCBG works with community groups and institutions to enhance their capacity to plan and implement community-redevelopment strategies. Its goal is to help neighborhood groups throughout Chicago increase the amount of public and private investment in their communities.

Part of NCBG's strategy for education organizing is to offer organizing tools to community-based organizations and parent and resident leaders, in order to advocate for capital improvements in public schools. Its current efforts include organizing around public schools in danger of closure due to low academic performance, some of which are even slated for demolition. These public schools are situated near Cabrini Green and the Robert Taylor Homes, public housing projects that are currently undergoing cataclysmic changes under the Chicago Housing Authority transformation plan. As it believes that closing a school should be a last resort, NCBG is calling for the preservation and use of the school facilities in a manner that meets the needs of the community.

Advocacy for School Facility Needs

While many school and community initiatives have created and sustained before- and after-school learning programs, on-site services, and other youth development and recreational programs, community organizers have also made progress in addressing needs for school facilities. Beyond the traditional model of the innocuous PTAs, national community-based organizing networks such as the Industrial Areas Federation, Pacific Institute of Community Organizers, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now and the Coalition for Community Schools have brought nontraditional stakeholders, such as parents and community organizers, to the table in the school facilities planning process. The Concordia model for community-school facilities planning and design, which is being pushed by major education reform coalitions, involves members of all school

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and community constituencies, including students, teachers, administrators, residents, and business and community leaders.[48]

Community-based developers can be valuable partners in providing technical assistance to organizing efforts. Many successful community-based education initiatives have used Geographic Information Systems, knowledge of community assets, and other community planning resources as effective organizing tools. Community-parent coalitions in urban areas that have successfully prevented the closure of neighborhood public schools have used data on overcrowding in nearby schools to illustrate the need to keep the school open.[49] Community-based developers can contribute to ongoing efforts with their real estate and development expertise, as well as their access to community resources.

What Community-Based Developers Can Learn From School and Community Initiatives	**How School and Community Initiatives Can Benefit From Community-Based Developers**
Community empowerment and participation are crucial components of self-sustaining communities.	Empowered residents make empowered parents.
Community-based developers' efforts are more effective when empowered residents are also empowered parents.	Community-based developers can offer real estate and development technical assistance as effective organizing tools for demanding capital improvements, including public school facilities, in neighborhoods.
Including all stakeholders in the school facilities planning process is imperative in assessing community needs and managing community assets, as well as in minimizing the negative impact a new school may have on a neighborhood.	Education initiatives are more effective when placed in a broader community-development context.

[48] Concordia, Inc. and the Rural School and Community Trust, *Creating School as Centers of the Community*, a workshop held in New Orleans, LA, June 15–18, 2000.
[49] Education Organizing, *School Construction: A National Need*, Issue #2, Center for Community Change, Washington, DC, March 2000.

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PART II: STRATEGIES FOR COMMUNITY-BASED DEVELOPERS

1. Coordinating the Development of Affordable Housing and School Facilities

One approach to using public schools as community-development tools is to coordinate the development of affordable housing with the development of school facilities. Community-based developers, who are already in the business of developing affordable housing, can use this approach to place their housing efforts within a broader community-development context. The level of coordination can vary, from direct collaboration with a school district to simply being aware of a school district's plans to build or rehabilitate a public school. Working with a school district to find the best strategy to concentrate resources should result in a mutually beneficial partnership.[50]

Curbing the Negative Effects of Involuntary Displacement

In the context of the mass involuntary displacement of public housing residents due to recent public housing authority transformation plans and the development of HOPE VI projects, as well as instances in which schools and housing are pitted against each other in the competition for space, community-based developers can coordinate affordable housing efforts with school districts to curb the negative effects of involuntary displacement. At a hearing in Atlanta before the Millennial Housing Commission, Atlanta Public Schools Superintendent Beverly Hall stressed the importance of collaboration between public housing authorities and school districts.[51] She described how communicating with the Atlanta Housing Authority about its plans for a HOPE VI project prevented the closure of a nearby school with low enrollment. Not only did Atlanta Public Schools shelve its plans to shut down the school, but the neighborhood improvements also inspired the rehabilitation of the school facilities. Similarly, community-based developers can work with school districts to prevent the closure of public schools[52] by developing affordable housing to create a market for the public school.

In cases where public schools and housing are in competition for space, such as in Los Angeles, the coordinated efforts of the school district and the community-based developer can minimize the negative effects of displacement. The use of alternative design principles such as smaller parcels, building up and joint-use facilities, can create situations where both needs are met without the unnecessary demolition of housing and displacement of residents. The renovation of the James Oyster School in Washington, DC, for example, entailed setting aside half of the original parcel for a luxury housing development, which helped finance the renovation of the school.[53] While the James Oyster School did not face the threat of demolition, it is still a model for developing win-win partnerships to create space, as well as funding.

When the school district is faced with the inevitable and must take properties by eminent domain, a community-based developer can work with the school district to build nearby replacement housing to retain residents in the neighborhood. The Los Angeles Unified School District offers Section 8 vouchers to qualified renters who are displaced by their current intervention. However, this does not guarantee that the replacement housing will be close to the new school. LAUSD's assessment of the availability of potential housing stock included all of Los Angeles County, of which the outermost

[50] Interview with Deane Evans, New Jersey Institute of Technology.
[51] Testimony before the Millennial Housing Commission, Atlanta, 2001.
[52] Urban schools are overcrowded, but students may be unevenly distributed, causing overcrowding in one area and underenrollment in another. Other reasons for uneven distribution include demographic changes and mass involuntary displacement.
[53] 21st Century School Fund Web site, 21csf.org.

limits are as far as 20 to 30 miles from the city proper.[54] Retaining residents in their neighborhood is the next best thing to avoiding displacement. Furthermore, limiting total displacement means that the people who are displaced can benefit from the presence of the new school.

The threat of involuntary displacement from the transformation plans of public housing authority or eminent domain is magnified by situations in which families are in danger of being priced out of their neighborhoods. Because good public schools can be an important factor in attracting mobile working- and middle-class families, community-based developers should also consider strategies for curbing the displacement of existing residents by increasing affordable housing opportunities near a new public school. Community-based developers should also react to gentrification pressures that contribute to housing instability, which, as discussed above, can cause high student mobility rates and lower the quality of education in the school.

A Strategy for Mixed-Income Development

With the powerful connection between public schools and neighborhood quality, the coordination of schools and housing can also be a strategy for creating mixed-income development. With rampant disinvestment in inner-city areas, and the decline of funding from state and federal governments over the years, many have argued that community-development strategies, including reinforcing the link between schools and neighborhoods, are not effective if they lead to the concentration of poverty. Gary Orfield writes: "Neither compensatory programs (such as Title I) nor community control have shown much promise in reversing an extremely powerful relationship between concentrated poverty in schools and lower achievement."[55] The presence of a magnet-caliber school would make mobile working- and middle-class families, and young couples, less inclined to relocate to the suburbs in search of better public schools.

The coordination of affordable housing and public schools can also be a strategy for creating mixed-income developments when additional incentives may be needed to attract tenants to market-rate units. As public schools can potentially be a draw for market-rate units in HOPE VI developments, it is not surprising that the U.S. Conference of Mayors included coordination between public housing authorities and public school districts among their recommendations to Congress concerning affordable housing.[56] With good quality education to match its good quality physical plant, a public school can be a means to sustain the mixed-income character of a neighborhood.

A mixed-income strategy is one of many tools that community-based developers can use for neighborhood revitalization. There are, indeed, many benefits to mixed-income neighborhoods. Beyond the injection of revenue for the city, the presence of an economically stable population increases the likelihood of more civil engagement in a neighborhood and the prompt delivery of public services, such as improvements to public schools. However, as Louise Adler has noted, community- and economic-development strategies should also include ways to increase the income level of low-income people, in addition to expending energies to attract and retain working- and middle-class populations.[57]

[54] Los Angeles Unified School District, *2002 Relocation Plan for the Proposed Priority and Escutia Plan Schools*, Office of Housing Relocation, Dec. 14, 2001, Appendix A.
[55] Orfield, comment in "Schools and Disadvantaged Neighborhoods," p. 371.
[56] Conference of Mayors Affordable Housing Recommendations to Congress, May 2002.
[57] Adler, p. 540.

Urban Strategies/McCormack Baron and Associates
Murphy Park and Jefferson Elementary School
St. Louis, Missouri

In 1997 McCormack Baron and Associates partnered with St. Louis Public Schools to revitalize Jefferson Elementary School concurrent with developing surrounding mixed-income housing. Jefferson School was seen as integral to the success of the housing developments, including attracting a mix of stable assisted- and working-class families to their affordable housing developments.

McCormack Baron established the COVAM Community Development Corporation to ensure that neighborhood residents could take part in identifying needs and creating a strategic plan for the neighborhood. With help from HUD and $3.5 million in private funds, the partners renovated Murphy Park and Jefferson School and sought to establish it as a model of innovative urban education. Jefferson School serves as the hub for the community, with job training opportunities, youth development programs and other intergenerational community uses.

Source: Myerson, Debra: Sustaining Urban Mixed-Income Communities: The Role of Community Facilities, *The ULI/ Charles H. Shaw Annual Forum on Urban Community Issues, Oct. 18–19, 2001, p. 6.*

Concentrating Resources

Concentrating affordable housing near public schools is a strategy to create a market for the housing as well as to reduce high student mobility rates. Concentrating resources reduces reliance on automobile and bus transportation, and fosters closer connections within the community. However, good strategic locations for concentrating resources, especially in older, urban neighborhoods, do not come easy or cheap, and community-based developers often have to be opportunistic in finding sites. Coordinating affordable-housing efforts whenever possible results in a better distribution of residents and public schools.

Concentrating resources can also be a strategy for community-based developers to find a market for their affordable-housing developments. Neighborhoods Inc. of Battle Creek, in Battle Creek, Michigan, worked in partnership with neighborhood schools, parents and other community-based organizations to acquire and rehabilitate a series of dilapidated homes along a dangerous corridor where many children walked to school. By strategically targeting a specific area, the community-based developer made the area safe for children to walk to school, and concurrently created an affordable home-ownership market for families who send their children to the school.[58]

Targeting Areas With High Student Mobility Rates

Strategically locating affordable housing near troubled schools with high student mobility rates, and concentrating resources whenever possible, can achieve the dual goals of providing affordable housing and also abating the deleterious effects on schools of housing instability and high student mobility rates.[59] Since most students who contribute to high mobility rates live in very-low-income

[58] Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation. *Winning Strategies: Best Practices in the Work of Home-Ownership Promotion*, Washington, DC, 2002, pp. 1-40 and 1-41.
[59] Rothstein, p. 10; Hartman, p. 228. Note: Homeless children and children of migrant workers are often part of this group. Besides securing permanent housing, the remedies that need to be implemented go beyond the scope of this paper.

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households, community-based developers should also consider creating affordable rental housing for families who cannot even obtain affordable home ownership.

Dayton's Bluff NHS
Homes for Learning
St. Paul, Minnesota

Homes for Learning is an excellent example of how a community-based developer, in this case Dayton's Bluff Neighborhood Housing Services, can combine strategies to reduce housing instability and improve the neighborhood public school. Started in 1999, Homes for Learning is a multiyear housing-stabilization effort focused around Dayton's Bluff School that combines affordable home ownership and affordable rental opportunities. Working with a state program, A+, which targets schools with the highest mobility rates in the state of Minnesota, Dayton's Bluff NHS continues to demonstrate the success of locating affordable housing opportunities near troubled public schools.

In the Dayton's Bluff neighborhood, 93 percent of the students meet the criteria for federal subsidized lunch programs. The average family size includes 4.5 school-age children. Almost all of the 550 students at Dayton's Bluff Elementary School are walkers (from within a half mile radius of the school). Much of the housing stock around the school is in need of rehabilitation. In a given school year, 88 percent of the students will move in or out of Dayton's Bluff — one of the highest student turnover rates in the state.

Affordable Home-Ownership Opportunities
DBNHS acquired and rehabbed 50 vacant substandard homes, which were offered to first-time, at-risk homebuyers whose children attend the Dayton's Bluff A+ School. The buyer's payment levels are set at 25 percent of their household adjusted income, which is reviewed annually. Eligible buyers must have household income equal to or less than 60 percent of area median income, and must not be able to qualify for conventional financing.

Affordable Rental Opportunities
DBNHS is currently developing a tax-credit project with 16 units available to incomes at 50 percent and 30 percent below AMI. The development is near the Dayton's Bluff A+ School, and serves lower-income families who cannot afford to buy homes.

Partners: Dayton's Bluff A+ School, Ramsey County, city of St. Paul, St. Paul Public Schools, the Wilder Foundation, state of Minnesota, and the residents and community-based organizations of Dayton's Bluff (including Dayton's Bluff NHS).

Financing: Tax credits, Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, Wilder Foundation, Minnesota Urban and Rural Homesteading Program, National Equity Fund, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, Federal Home Loan Bank, Ramsey County Housing Endowment Fund.

Source: Twin Cities NHS. "Rental Initiative Targets School Families," Raising the Roof, *June 2002; interview with Michelle Vojacek, Dayton's Bluff NHS, and additional information provided by Dayton's Bluff NHS.*

2. The Development of School Facilities as a Strategy for Community Development

Participating in the school facilities planning and design process, or directly developing school facilities, is another strategy for community-based developers to place their work in a comprehensive community-development context. Over the years, most community-based developers and their funders have focused their efforts on the development of affordable housing. Although affordable housing is arguably one of the more pressing needs in community development, community-based developers have often been criticized for not having the capacity or agenda to address other

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community needs, such as open space and public schools. On occasion, this discrepancy has led to conflicts and misunderstandings between community-based developers and their constituents over the best use of a vacant lot or an abandoned building, or the assessment of what the community needs most. While working closely with community organizers plays a very important role in this respect, responding flexibly to different needs is a way that community-based developers can fulfill their mission to address the social, economic and physical needs of a neighborhood.

One of the key recommendations from a recent Urban Land Institute conference on the role of community facilities in creating and sustaining mixed-income neighborhoods was to identify a developer "who can play an active role in the conceptual, as well as physical, construction of the facility."[60] Community-based developers fit this role well, having the real estate savvy and development know-how of the built environment. They also have the proven track record to "build neighborhoods in a timely, cost effective, accountable and sensitive fashion."[61] The need to build more schools and improve aging infrastructure, the possibility for using new and innovative design solutions, and acknowledgment of the importance of reinforcing the link between schools and communities, all increase the feasibility for community-based developers to directly participate in the school facilities planning process.

As partners and developers of school facilities, community-based developers can channel public school resources into areas with the greatest need. While public schools are in constant need of money, and schools in inner-city areas are often struggling financially, as a major public infrastructure public schools do have many resources at their disposal. Resources can range from the power of eminent domain to ownership of underutilized and abandoned property. Being able to assess the best use of abandoned or underutilized properties owned by a school district opens up many possibilities, not only to develop schools where they are needed, but also to partner with the school district to acquire land for other uses, such as affordable work-force housing for teachers.

Building Capacity

Precedents such as charter schools, on- and off-site child-care facilities and learning centers demonstrate community-based developers' capacity to develop education-related facilities. One reason why community-based developers currently do not develop public school facilities is the perceived and real bureaucratic barrier to development. Another reason is that neighborhood-based public schools come with their own set of regulations that community-based developers may not have the capacity to address. Byron, Exter and Mediratta write, "Standardizing school projects may not be feasible or desirable. Each school brings its own set of constituencies, a pedagogical agenda that affects the design and use of school space, and unique local issues in the planning and development of the site."[62]

Building the capacity to develop public school facilities is a worthwhile but costly investment, and requires the support of funders and intermediaries to provide monetary support and technical assistance. A recent informal survey by the Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing of its community-based developer membership indicates a willingness to develop public school facilities, provided that they get technical assistance and the monetary incentives to do so.[63] In addition to

[60] Myerson, Debra, *Sustaining Urban Mixed-Income Communities: The Role of Community Facilities*, proceedings the ULI/Charles H. Shaw Annual Forum on Urban Community Issues, Oct. 18–19, 2001, p. 6.
[61] Michelle Neugebauer on the proven track record of CDCs. *Shelterforce*, No. 118, July/August 2001.
[62] Byron, Exter and Mediratta, "Places to Learn," *Shelterforce*, No. 118, July/August 2001.
[63] Interview with Jan Breidenbach, Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing.

capacity building, funding for community-based development corporations could also be allocated to staff positions that specialize in community-school relations and school facilities development.

Working groups focused on building the capacity of community-based developers have recently formed in some urban areas, which suggests that community-development practitioners are beginning to acknowledge the importance of having the capacity and flexibility to develop community facilities, including public schools, beyond affordable housing developments.

Community Housing, Community Schools Working Group **Los Angeles, California**	**New York City School Construction Working Group** **New York, New York**
The Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing is an umbrella organization for affordable housing practitioners, including community-based developers. SCANPH has worked closely with the Los Angeles Unified School District to identify stakeholders and key partners in minimizing the negative impacts of LAUSD's current plans to build 85 schools by 2005. SCANPH is currently developing a multiyear initiative that will build a collaborative partnership among targeted housing developers, community representatives and school districts. The working group will discuss ways to offer technical assistance and to increase the capacity of community-based developers to build public school facilities. It also aims to develop strategies for coalition-building between community-based developers and school districts, as well as to generate a list of policy recommendations that result from these unique partnerships.	The New York City School Construction Working Group is a collaborative of community-based organizations, including community-based developers and academics with a mission to address the capital needs of the largest and most overcrowded public-school system in the country.[64] It has made recommendations to the New York City Construction Authority, including strategies for how some of its members, including the Cypress Hills community-based developers can contribute to citywide efforts to build more schools. Currently Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation and Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development are demonstrating their capacity to develop public-school facilities by rehabilitating a warehouse that will house the Cypress Hills Community School (see case study following the next section).

Building Schools Where They Are Needed

Community-based developers can help develop public school facilities in neighborhoods where school districts are slow to respond to the need for better quality schools. In many cases, a community cannot convince the school district or the city to build a new school even when there is a tremendous need. For instance, in San Francisco, before the Tenderloin School was built, there were 1,000 neighborhood students bused to 47 different schools.[65] Currently in Roxbury, a Boston neighborhood, over 3,000 students are bused to 96 different schools.[66] Charter schools have responded to this need in inner-city areas and are models for how community-based developers can develop neighborhood-based public schools. Others have developed facilities with the intent that they would be sold or leased to the school district or city to be used as public schools. However, it is difficult to find the initial resources to develop the facilities. Therefore, access to public school resources, including money, political clout, public support and in some cases even land and underutilized properties, can

[64] Interview with Joan Byron, Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development, and *Shelterforce*, No. 118, July/August 2001.
[65] *New Schools in Older Neighborhoods*, last section.
[66] Interview with Roz Everdell, Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative.

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add mileage to community-based developers' efforts to develop public school facilities. Furthermore, these resources can be leveraged for other community-development needs, such as affordable housing and economic development.

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation
Cypress Hills Community School
Brooklyn, New York

Brooklyn's Cypress Hills Community School was founded by parents and community leaders in 1997 with support from the New York–based New Visions for Public Schools. Based on an innovative dual-language (English-Spanish) model with strong parental leadership, it currently serves 150 students, K–6, with plans to expand to 400 pre-K–8 when it opens new facilities.

Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, one of the school's cofounders, contributes significant staff and board resources by supporting parental involvement, leveraging additional resources and developing the facility to house the school. After three steady years of organizing by the collaborators, the city council allocated $20 million to purchase and renovate an underutilized warehouse into a school and community facility. The Cypress Hills Community School demonstrates the "tremendous potential for community-based developers to produce desperately needed educational facilities that are responsive to educational program in high need areas, and to involve teachers and parents in advocating for and designing the school."

Source: "Profile: The Cypress Hill Community School," Shelterforce, *No. 118, July/August 2001; interviews with Michelle Neugebauer, Executive Director, Cypress Hills Local Development Corporation, and Joan Byron, Architectural Director, Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development.*

Learning From Charter Schools

Community-based developers and neighborhood-based public schools can learn from charter schools that have successfully channeled much-needed quality educational opportunities into inner-city areas. Students at model charter schools such as Neighborhood House Charter School in Dorchester, Massachusetts[67] and Camino Pueblo Nuevo Charter Academy in Los Angeles[68] often surpass other children academically in their respective cities. Charter schools also have the flexibility to cater to the needs of immigrant students and their families, for example, and to other special needs that regular public schools do not address as successfully. The greatest challenges that community-based developers face when creating charter-school facilities are the upfront development costs and finding space suitable to public school standards, without help from the school district. For charter schools, the necessity to find a facility has also led to innovative solutions, such as the adaptive reuse of an underutilized strip mall or warehouse.

Charter Schools: Charter schools offer free public elementary and/or secondary education under a charter granted by the state legislature or other appropriate authority.[69] Often the biggest challenges that charter schools face are finding facilities and obtaining funds to pay upfront capital construction costs.

[67] Schor, Jonathan. "Give Charter Schools a Chance," *The Nation*, June 5, 2000.
[68] Interview with Philip Lance, Pueblo Nuevo Development.
[69] National Center for Education Statistics, *Overview of Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts, School Year 2000–01*, May 2002, glossary.

32 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Pueblo Nuevo Local Development Corporation
Camino Nuevo Charter Academy
Los Angeles

Pueblo Nuevo Local Development Corporation is one of the largest providers of charter schools in southern California, although the organization focuses on all aspects of community needs, including job training and economic development.

Camino Nuevo Charter Academy is a charter school that serves 240 students. With the collaboration and support of community leaders and community-based organizations, Pueblo Nuevo rehabbed a former strip mall on a 0.3-acre lot into classroom space. Recreational activities are accommodated through a joint-use arrangement with a nearby park.

Capital costs for the project totaled $650,000 for site acquisition and $350,000 for construction, or an average expenditure of $4,200 per student — about one-fifth of the average cost to build a public school. Short-term, low-interest loans provided by the Low Income Housing Fund and other private resources were used to cover upfront development costs. As New Schools / Better Neighborhoods has noted, "given the large quantity of small faltering shopping center sites available throughout the Los Angeles region, the lack of disruption to existing residents and improvement of urban fabric of the adjoining commercial streets presented clear advantages for planning at a small scale."[70]

Source: Interview with Phillip Lance, Executive Director, Pueblo Nuevo Development.

Charter schools should be developed by community-based developers whenever it makes sense to do so. However, while charter schools are a great service to the public school system in that they free up capital resources and reduce the need for a the public school in a given area, the burden of finding facility space and coming up with money to cover upfront costs is a big and harrowing task. While charter schools are a relatively new concept and present a mixed record of failure and success, the burden to find and finance facilities can keep charter schools from fulfilling their missions. The irony is that community-based alternative schools often need to look outside their neighborhoods for space. As New Schools / Better Neighborhoods has noted, "because charter schools receive operating funds from the state, which the school may well have to draw on to pay off capital costs, funding for facilities comes at a direct cost to program operation."[71]

Developing Facilities for Future Public School Use

Independently developing a school facility with the eventual goal of turning it over to the school district is another strategy for community-based developers, when school districts are slow to respond to a community's need for a school. The schools can temporarily function as private schools, or they can be sold or leased to the school district upon completion. The New York City School Construction Working Group has proposed a plan for community-based developers to acquire and renovate buildings, and then lease the completed spaces to the city as public schools. The financing would be from private sources, and lease payments would be set at levels sufficient to cover building operation, debt service and resources.[72] As in the case of charter schools, it is difficult and risky to rely on outside resources to cover development costs, especially when developing facilities that are up to par with stringent guidelines for public school facilities. However, the development of pilot buildings may be the only way in the present to get things done.

[70] *What If?*, pp. 23–24.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Byron, Exter and Mediratta, "Places to Learn," *Shelterforce*, No. 118, July/August 2001.

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Sandtown-Winchester Habitat for Humanity and New Song Learning Center
Community Building In Partnership
Baltimore, Maryland

The New Song Academy is located in the Sandtown-Winchester neighborhood of West Baltimore, Maryland, and is part of a long-term, communitywide effort spearheaded by New Song Urban Ministries that focuses on a 15-square block area with a median income below $10,000. Sandtown-Winchester Habitat for Humanity alone has built over 160 homes for low- and very-low-income families, and has developed job training, health-care initiatives and youth development programs.

In 1991 New Song Urban Ministries added the New Song Community Learning Center, with a preschool and youth development programs. In conjunction with the learning center, New Song Academy opened in 1994 and eventually became a K–8 public school in 1997 under Baltimore Public School's "New Schools Initiative." The full- and part-time staff comes primarily from the neighborhood. The school is surrounded by affordable homes built by Habitat for Humanity; thus a majority of the students live within blocks of the school, and the student mobility rate is very low. This is an exception for a public school in Baltimore, where it is not unusual for an entire student population to turn over during the course of a school year.

Source: Interview with Allan Tibbels, Sandtown-Winchester Habitat for Humanity and New Song Learning Center, and Sandtown-Winchester Habitat for Humanity Web site, www.sandtownhabitat.org.

3. Using Public Schools as Tools for Economic Development

Community-based developers can also use public schools as tools for economic development. Strategies can include providing better school-to-work transitions, developing better relationships with local employers, and channeling public school investments locally. With virtually no guarantee of work upon graduation, it is curious to wonder, as Kozol writes, whether "a decision to drop out of school, no matter how much we discourage it, is not, in fact, a logical decision."[73] Improving the school-to-work transition through community economic development strategies implies a shift in the purpose of public education, from providing "low-income native and immigrant students with basic...skills required for routine work"[74] to providing access to educational and vocational opportunities in order to raise the incomes of lower-income people. Overall, local economic development strategies should "change economic realities rather than simply trying to remedy social problems."[75]

Improving the School-to-Work Transition Through Community Economic Development

Balancing out college-preparatory education with vocational-training opportunities can be a strategy to fill the widening gap between the rich and the poor. The U.S. has only 345 vocational schools out of 93,273 public schools in the United States,[76] and arguably the worst school-to-work transition process of any industrialized nation.[77] A strategy using public schools as economic development tools should include developing school-to-work programs, job training opportunities and apprenticeships, as well as the spaces, such as computer labs and workshops, to accommodate them. In 1994, the School to Work Opportunities Act offered subsidies for the development of coordinated programs

[73] Quoting Kozol (1991). Adler, p. 528.
[74] Wilson, p. 151.
[75] Adler, p. 528.
[76] National Center for Education Statistics, *Profile of Public Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts 2000–2001*, May 2002.
[77] Quoting Ray Marshall. Wilson, p. 216.

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between schools and businesses to provide apprenticelike settings. However, interest in apprenticeships waned as "the idea gained power that twenty-first-century jobs required an academic college education for all."[78] Rothstein writes:

> Exaggerated beliefs about the occupational structure and its opportunities can have dire results for students...These inappropriate signals are reflected in another pervasive cliché in the worlds of education and policy: that without college, a youth will be "flipping burgers." But reality is not bimodal...Many occupations with middle-class pay — computer and health technicians, equipment repair or finance personnel — demand vocational or on-the-job training, not bachelor's degrees.[79]

As an economic development strategy, a critical mass of vocation-oriented programs in public schools could also potentially attract businesses drawn to a specially trained work force.

Vocational Education: Focuses primarily on vocational, technical or career education, and provides education or training in at least one semiskilled or technical occupation.

Another strategy for economic development is to find a third party, such as a large employer or a university, to arrange formal school-to-work transition programs, as well as to leverage resources for public school facilities. With help from HUD's Office of University Partnerships, many successful university-community partnerships have emerged in recent years. The partner can guarantee the graduates employment or admission to their university upon successful completion of the training programs. Partnerships with local employers and academic institutions not only increase a well-trained future work force, but also establish trust between public schools and local businesses and institutions. These vocational-training opportunities should not be limited to students, but also made available to the community at large.

Partnership with Worcester Public Schools and the Hiatt Center for Public Schools, Clark University
Worcester Education Partnership
Worcester, Massachusetts

Clark University's partnership with Worcester Public Schools is an example of how a third party can be a valuable partner in providing opportunities for both vocational training and access to postsecondary education.

The Hiatt Center for Public Schools (the college of education at Clark University) co-established the University Park Campus School (grades 7–12), where Clark faculty and students serve as mentors and tutors, and UPCS students can take college-level courses. UPCS students who meet Clark's admission requirements are eligible to attend the university tuition-free.

As part of the Worcester Education Partnership, there are also efforts to improve and expand upon vocational-technical opportunities within the Worcester Public Schools district.[80]

[78] Rothstein, p. 8.
[79] Ibid, p.10.
[80] Clark University Web site, www.clarku.edu.

35 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

School as Economic Development Drivers

Using public schools as community economic development tools would not be complete without strategies that use public schools themselves as community capital. Public school districts are often "the largest individual employer in many small towns and cities across the United States,"[81] and in distressed urban areas "one of the larger enterprises in the community in terms of total dollars expended."[82] The Los Angeles Unified School District, for example, is the third largest employer in Los Angeles County.[83] Community-based developers can partner with school districts to develop locally based investment strategies, as well as work-force development and housing programs.

Hiring and Investing Locally

Community-based developers can work with school districts to develop strategies that channel public school resources into local investments. Money that goes in and out of schools can be invested in credit unions, community development loans,[84] and other local lending institutions. Services offered at public schools, such as food provision, janitorial operations, and supplies and maintenance, could also be obtained from local businesses and residents. Furthermore, community-based developers and the school district can partner to develop commercial spaces for entrepreneurial or start-up businesses that supply services and merchandise to local schools.

Community-based developers can also partner with school districts to improve their own school-to-work programs. The school facilities crisis, for example, is an opportunity to develop job-training programs and apprenticeships. Programs such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Brownfields Economic Development Initiative, which trains people for brownfields remediation work, and HUD's Youthbuild Program, which trains high-risk teenagers to build homes while encouraging them to finish high school, can be incorporated into apprenticeship programs to build schools or to make capital improvements on school facilities. Not only do local residents gain job-training skills, but the school and the neighborhood benefit as well.

The development of teacher-training and capacity-building programs can also ensure that the school will have a well trained and qualified staff. Training-to-work programs with a strong emphasis on service learning and other community-related activities can foster relationships between teachers and the communities where they work, and increase the likelihood that teachers will remain in the neighborhood.

Work-Force Housing

School administrators are often skeptical about using school resources to build work-force housing. One administrator asserts, "Building housing is not the main mission of school districts. Education is."[85] Community-based developers, who are already in the business of providing affordable housing, can partner with school districts to handle the "community development" side of public education, including the development of work-force housing. In addition, school districts are more likely to offer their resources to the development of work-force housing than affordable housing that may curb high student mobility rates, for example. The development of work-force housing for public schools has

[81] Picus and Bryan, p. 443.
[82] Adler, p. 540.
[83] Ibid, p. 443.
[84] Kerchner, p. 435.
[85] *Los Angeles Times*, "District Offers Teachers Shelter From Housing Costs," August 5, 2002.

already gained considerable momentum and success. Since a typical public school teacher salary does not cover housing costs, especially in urban areas with tight housing markets, several intermediaries, foundations, municipalities, school districts and community-based developers have developed affordable home ownership and rental opportunities for public-school teachers.

Work-force housing for public school teachers can be an effective part of a comprehensive community-development strategy. One teacher's opinion of homebuying incentive programs was that the costs of living in dangerous (both perceived and real) and disinvested neighborhoods outweigh the benefits of affordable home ownership.[86] Housing incentives for public-school staff, especially teachers, not only attracts qualified staff but retains them in the neighborhood as well. Attracting qualified teachers, especially to underserved urban schools, is an imperative component of revitalizing public schools and communities. The U.S. Department of Education reported in 1999 that 22 percent of all new teachers leave the profession in the first three years.[87] Disinvested urban areas also tend to have the highest teacher turnover rates, which are just as detrimental to neighborhoods as they are to schools. Work-force housing also helps mitigate transportation and pollution problems by decreasing commuting distances. Furthermore, with affordable housing in livable neighborhoods as a bargaining chip, public schools can begin to demand higher standards from teachers.

[86] Interview with Danielle Lei, public elementary school teacher in Brooklyn, NY.
[87] U.S. Department of Education, *A Back to School Report on the Baby Boom Echo: No End in Sight*, August 19, 1999.

PART III: IMPLEMENTATION

INITIAL STEPS

While there are strategies that community-based developers can apply immediately to their current work, the full-fledged use of public school resources for community development requires the cooperation of many different factions, and fundamental changes in education and community-development policies. However, the immense benefits to the quality of education and quality of life make using public schools as community-development tools a worthy long-term goal for policy-makers, academics and practitioners. This section will consider initial steps in addressing barriers to development, including school-district bureaucracy and the lack of funding and technical assistance for comprehensive community development.

School-District Bureaucracy: One Big Hurdle

One of the biggest challenges, if not *the* biggest challenge, facing community-based developers in participating in the school facilities planning process is the overwhelmingly bureaucratic nature of the public school system. As an independent, local government entity, the interests of a school district may come into conflict with the city, neighborhood groups, organized labor and community-based developers, resulting in a backlog of unmet tasks.

Another challenge is that while schools do indeed make decisions that affect communities in profound ways, they often see themselves in the business of education and not community development. Some places, such as New York City, Los Angeles and the state of New Jersey,[88] have created departments or agencies in order to separate construction and maintenance of public schools from their education mission. Critics assert that these agencies have created more bureaucracy and reflect an unwillingness to work with existing community organizations and networks. In addition to establishing relationships and building trust with public school officials, community-based developers should take on as much of the community-development side of public education as school officials are willing to give up.

In coming to the table with public school officials, community-development practitioners should communicate development strategies in terms of benefits to education. In order to establish common ground with educators, community-based developers should show how affordable housing benefits learning, how sustainable neighborhoods improve test scores, and how joint-use facilities improve reading skills. Youth development programs are a much easier sell for the very reason that before- and after-school programs, job training and recreational activities tend to produce tangible improvements in academic achievement. The benefits of healthy neighborhoods on academic achievement are less tangible. Studies have shown a positive correlation between the physical condition of school facilities and student achievement. While this evidence does not say much about the influence that neighborhoods may have on student achievement, the influence of the physical environment on learning suggests the inherent links between public schools and neighborhoods. Glen Earthman writes, "Although the percentile differences may be small, anything that helps is crucial to a principal or superintendent looking for ways to boost achievement."[89]

[88] *New York Times*, "[New Jersey Gov.] McGreevey Creates a Corporation to Speed School Repairs and Construction," July 30, 2002.
[89] "Poor physical plant affects student achievement, discipline," *American Teacher*, November 1997.

Another strategy for community-based developers to find common ground with educators is to use the federally mandated list of low-performing schools, which every state must make publicly accessible, as a tool to target their community-development efforts. Coming to the table with the intention of helping public schools by targeting areas that have been identified as low performing is an opportunity for school officials and community-based developers (as well as other stakeholders) to create a win-win partnership. Using community-development strategies that address nonacademic barriers to learning is preferable to giving up on the school, both in terms of cost-effectiveness and of preventing the damaging effects of displacement on students, teachers and the neighborhood.

Tapping into Alternative Private and Public Resources

Private Resources

Community-based developers cannot incorporate public schools into community-development strategies without the support of their funders. From a development perspective, public school facilities are high-risk investments, with virtually no returns. While CDFIs have been known to finance charter-school facilities, they often offer short-term, low-interest loans. Most CDFIs are loath to finance the construction of place-based, public school facilities due to higher risks[90] associated with the bureaucratic aspects of public schools — even when capital costs are reimbursed (albeit not in a timely manner) by the school district. According to New Schools / Better Neighborhoods, the local and state project-approval process can take as long as seven years.[91] Furthermore, the costs to build public schools are exorbitant in comparison to the resources available from private grants and community-development finance agencies. A typical CDFI grant for a charter school may be around $50,000, while the cost of developing a school may be as much as $20 million.[92]

CDFIs should take on more risk, especially when a well-organized coalition of community groups, parents, teachers and community-based developers are behind an effort. Byron, Exter and Mediratta write:

> Both funders and [community-based organizations] may need to assume more financial risk. Lenders may need to advance substantial funds in the early stages of a project based primarily on the [community-based developer's] skill and determination to see it through, rather than seeking guarantee on return.[93]

CDFIs and funders such as foundations and intermediaries can encourage the development of public school facilities with innovative design practices that can substantially reduce capital costs.[94] A combination of changes in school-financing policies and the use of cost-reducing innovative design strategies, such as the joint-use model and the adaptive reuse of buildings, can reduce the risk of lending to community-based school facilities. Furthermore, extended roles for a school facility, such as intergenerational uses, provide lenders with "a greater return on investment in school facilities,

[90] Interview with Nancy Andrews, Low Income Housing Fund.
[91] *What If?*, p. 9.
[92] Interview with Joan Byron, Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development.
[93] Byron, Exter and Mediratta, "Places to Learn," *Shelterforce*, No. 118, July/August 2001.
[94] A number of foundations have been instrumental in funding education initiatives in the past decade, including programs for youth development and parent leadership. A smaller number, including the Lyndhurst Foundation, KnowledgeWorks Foundation and Ford Foundation, have addressed public schools in a community-development context. While foundations should continue their support for education initiatives, they should also consider the importance of housing and physical plant on education, and the advantages that community developers can bring to education initiatives.

while giving schools the physical capacity to function as centers of community."[95] Using the model of win-win partnerships means that in addition to mission-based lending institutions, conventional lenders, local businesses and for-profit builders can also be (and often have been) resources for comprehensive community development.

Public Resources

Another implication of placing public schools in a broader community-development context is the need for greater municipal involvement in the school facilities planning process. With such a strong connection between property taxes and public school quality, it is not surprising that mayors in Chicago, New York City and Boston have taken over their school districts. These takeovers also acknowledge the powerful influence public schools have on cities. Cities can offer zoning variances to facilitate the coordinated efforts of school districts and community-based developers.[96] Moreover, a city can offer resources, such as underutilized land or property, that it could lease or donate to comprehensive development efforts.

Cities can also leverage resources from the private sector to create new sources of funding for public-school improvement and comprehensive community development. Cities sometimes impose impact fees to offset the effects of increased enrollment when a new housing development is built near a school. The threat of impact fees alone could be enough to "inspire" for-profit developers to offer compensation for the impact their developments have on neighborhood public schools. In tax increment financing districts, in which TIF funds new residential housing, the municipality is required to reimburse school districts for some of the increased costs that the district has to assume.[97] Dedicating a portion of general fund money or TIF funds for comprehensive development should be seen by cities as a sound investment.

Furthermore, in forging closer relationships with the city as well as school districts, community-based developers can leverage political or local support for other community-based efforts such as open space, economic development and affordable housing, by presenting community needs as a package deal. Attention often paid to public schools can help put pertinent but less popular issues, such as affordable housing, on the radar screen.

[95] Coalition for Community Schools, p. 28.
[96] Interview with Deane Evans, New Jersey Institute of Technology.
[97] Neighborhood Capital Budget Group, *TIF Almanac*, 2002–2003, p. 22.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Comprehensive Community Development

Agencies at the state and federal level should offer competitive grants to encourage the use of public schools in comprehensive community development. Funding should encourage comprehensive community development whenever possible, but without siphoning existing, dedicated sources of revenue. That is, housing subsidies should not be diverted to fund public school construction. Agencies should also oversee the fair distribution of funds to areas with the most needs, such as inner-city public schools — based both on financial capacities and the condition of the physical plant.[98]

Intergovernmental Coordination

Strategies for comprehensive community development, particularly involving public schools, only succeed with the will and cooperation of all stakeholders, and also different levels of government. Land-use and financing policies should require coordination between federal agencies, such as HUD and the Department of Education, as well as between federal, state, local and district-level governments. These policies should work in concert to give enough support, as well as flexibility, for most of the decisions to be made at the neighborhood level between the public school, community-based organizations, parents, teachers and students.

Incentives for Infill Development

In urban areas, where land tends to be scarce, infill development is the answer to finding sites for comprehensive community development. School facility sprawl can be curbed with monetary incentives, as well as commitment to remediate brownfields. Brownfields remediation and development for comprehensive community development should be encouraged at federal, state and local levels.

More Funding

More money is necessary to reduce high teacher turnover rates and other sources of inequality in many public schools. Funds need to be used, however, in intelligent and innovative ways. Encouraging the development of schools in the context of community development, and using smart design, such as joint-use facilities and the adaptive reuse of buildings, not only solves problems that an increase in funding alone can never solve, but saves money as well.

In addition, schools are falling apart due to a lack of commitment to maintaining them. Standards must be developed to allocate sufficient funding to cover operating expenses. While it is important to put teeth in federal mandates for lead-based paint abatement, ADA accessibility and asbestos removal, meeting those mandates in addition to properly maintaining schools requires additional funding.

[98] Millennial Housing Commission, *Meeting Our Nation's Housing Challenges*, Washington, DC, May 30, 2002, pp. 38–39.

Increased Federal Commitment to Education

Although public school decision-making is most effective at the local, neighborhood scale, funding schools in terms of comprehensive community development requires a greater federal commitment to public education.[99] The federal government sees its role in education policy as maintaining standards and ensuring that every child has an equitable educational opportunity. But the fact that only six percent of funding for schools comes from the federal government illustrates how small a role it really plays. In addition, most federal compensatory programs do little to link public schools to a broader community-development context.

Figure 8. School Facilities–Related Legislation Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

School Facility Infrastructure Act	Helps schools fund school repairs, construction and modernization projects.
21st Century Learning Centers Grant	Grants for school-based, before- and after-school enrichment and care programs.
Impact Aid	Compensates for loss of local tax base caused by federal activity, such as the presence of military bases or other government property.

Source: U.S. Department of Education

Implications for Education Policy

Placing public schools within their broader community context has several implications for education policy as well. Education policies must reflect the dual roles of public schools as social infrastructure and physical infrastructure. Since communities can use public schools as community-development tools, schools should also use communities as tools for education. Volunteerism and service learning can create mutually beneficial and sustainable relationships between public schools and neighborhoods.

In assessing inequalities in schools, policies should address community-related, nonacademic barriers to learning, such as the connection between high student mobility rates and housing instability. Indicators beyond test scores, such as an increase in respect for neighbors, student volunteerism, lack of graffiti in the neighborhood, and low student- and teacher-mobility rates, should also be considered measures of public school success. In addition, to consider schools in their broader community context implies that stability is good and that mobility may be harmful in the long run. Furthermore, education policy should also expand vocational opportunities and encourage school districts to invest locally.

Another implication of reinforcing the link between public schools and neighborhoods is the decentralization of the public school system, with more decisions made at the local level. Decentralization acknowledges that communities are unique, and "good public schools can and should be different

[99] The Clinton Administration considered an initiative that would offer competitive grants to school boards that worked with the community to design schools as centers of their communities. Neighborhood Capital Budget Group, *Rebuilding Our Schools Brick By Brick*, Chicago, IL, 1999, p. 82.

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from one another."[100] However, decentralized public schools should be accountable, but not wholly responsible, for maintaining their own solvency.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- In coming years suburbs will be faced with enormous pressures, with most of the growth in school-age populations projected to occur there. Suburban public schools are beginning to encounter problems with aging infrastructure as well as resegregation.[101] How can the revitalization of urban public schools work as an incentive to attract working- and middle-class families back into the cities?

- One-quarter of public schools are rural, and they enroll one in eight students. Like many urban public schools, rural public schools are no strangers to poverty,[102] and experience similar problems with high student-mobility rates and recruiting qualified teachers, albeit under different circumstances. What are the implications of using public schools as tools for community development in a rural context?[103]

- A recent Columbia University study concludes that community-based developers are well positioned to address the needs of early childhood development. While a survey by the Congress of Community and Economic Development indicates that 21 percent of CDCs reported child care as one of their major activities, and that many CDCs have rehabilitated homes for child-care use, the Columbia study states that "CDCs have the potential to play a stronger role in promoting improved outcomes for young children and families if they had access to better resources and technical assistance."[104] How can early childhood development be tied to current efforts to reinforce the link between schools and neighborhoods, and what role can community-based developers play in developing child-care facilities within this context? How can serving the needs of early childhood development be used as a strategy for economic development?

- How can community-based developers work with educators to address the specific needs of a neighborhood, such as bilingual schools? How can the success of specialty public schools such as Cypress Hills Community School be emulated? What are the implications of catering to local needs on education policy?

- What are the physical, functional and social differences between elementary and secondary schools, and how do those differences play out in the context of community and economic development?

[100] Hill, p. 506.
[101] *Boston Globe*, "Report Sees Segregation Increase in School," August 10, 2002.
[102] Annenberg Foundation, *The Annenberg Challenge: Lessons and Reflections on Public School Reform*, March 2002, p. 11.
[103] It should be noted that innovative school-facilities design is embraced by rural advocates as well. See the Rural School and Community Trust, www.ruraledu.org, Challenge West Virginia, www.wvcovenanthouse.org/challengewv, and Concordia, Inc., www.concordia.com.
[104] Adely, p. 3.

CONCLUSION

Community-based developers can help galvanize change in public school service by tapping into their full potential to address the social, economic and physical needs of a neighborhood. While urban public schools are faced with limited resources, their inherent links to neighborhood quality and access to other resources, and their integral position in everyday lives, constitute them as unrealized community-development capital.

- ***Public schools and neighborhoods are inherently linked.*** The conditions of public schools and neighborhoods are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, it is crucial for community-based developers to include public schools in their community-development strategies.

- ***There is an urgent national need to repair and build public schools.*** Federal mandates to reduce class size and the need to accommodate a growing school-age population compound frequently overlooked problems such as aging infrastructure and overcrowding. The condition of many schools' physical plant is especially severe in urban areas, where problems with funding and access to resources make facilities more vulnerable.

- ***Public schools are points of entry for community-based developers to practice comprehensive community development.*** Community-based developers can ally with other education reformers to reinforce the link between schools and neighborhoods. Smaller size schools, joint-use facilities, infill development and the adaptive reuse of underutilized properties, as well as the importance of empowering parents, students and teachers to demand accountability in public schools, are ideas that community-based developers should embrace, as well as being appropriate sources of community development.

- ***Placing public schools in a broader community-development context has many implications, including the creation of a new community-based developer.*** There are three approaches to using public schools as community-development tools: the coordinated development of affordable housing and public-school facilities, the direct or indirect development of public-school facilities, and the use of public schools as tools for economic development.

- ***Focusing on a shared mission fosters a relationship between stakeholders and produces win-win outcomes.*** It is not necessary, nor does it make sense, for community-based developers to wear school administrator hats, and vice versa. However, it is important for all stakeholders to find common ground and coordinate their efforts to create livable, sustainable communities and to raise academic achievement in public schools.

- ***Reinforcing the link between public schools and communities is not only good education policy, but also good community-development policy and practice.*** Policymakers must acknowledge the profound impact that public schools have on communities, and vice versa. Implications for comprehensive community development include an increased and direct federal role in public education, emphasis on neighborhood-based public schools, and policies that encourage local economic investment.

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National Trust for Historic Preservation
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Southern California Association of Non-Profit Housing
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Texas Interfaith Education Fund
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Town of Littleton
Jason Hoch, Planner
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Twin Cities Community Development Corp.
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(978) 342-9561

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Internet Resources[105]

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO: www.aft.org
Cities, Counties and Schools Partnership (CA): www.ccspartnership.org
Council of Great City Schools: www.cgcs.org
ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education: eric-web.tc.columbia.edu
National Education Association: www.nea.org
National Center for Education Statistics: www.nces.gov
U.S. Department of Education: www.ed.gov
U.S. Department of Education, School Construction and Design: www.ed.gov/inits/construction

Organizing Efforts
Alliance of Schools Initiative, Texas IAF: www.communityschools.org/alliance.html
Center for Community Change: www.communitychange.org/education
Challenge West Virginia: www.wvcovenanthouse.org/challengewv
Communities in Schools: www.communityschools.org
Institute for Educational Leadership: www.iel.org
National Community Education Association (NCEA): www.ncea.org
Neighborhood Capital Budget Group: www.ncbg.org
ACORN: www.acorn.org
Pacific Institute for Community Organization (PICO): www.piconetwork.org

Smart Growth Design, School Facilities
21st Century School Fund: 21csf.org
AIA Committee on Architecture for Education: www.aia.org/PIA/cae/iesp
Concordia, Inc.: www.concordia.com
Council of Education Facilities Planners International: www.cefpi.org
National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities: www.edfacilities.org

[105] Most states and schools districts, and some municipalities, have their own public-school construction-related Web sites. For New York City, see the New York City Construction Authority. The Los Angeles Unified School District also has an Office of Housing Relocation.

National Trust for Historic Preservation: www.nationaltrust.org
New Schools / Better Neighborhoods: www.nsbn.org
The Rural School and Community Trust: www.ruraledu.org

Education and School Facilities Funders
Annenberg Foundation: www.whannenberg.org
Annie E. Casey Foundation: www.aecf.org
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation: www.mott.org
Enterprise Foundation: www.enterprisefoundation.org
Fannie Mae Foundation: www.fanniemaefoundation.org
Ford Foundation: www.fordfound.org
KnowledgeWorks Foundation (OH): www.kwfdn.org
Local Initiatives Support Corporation: www.lisc.org
Low Income Housing Fund: www.lihf.org
Lyndhurst Foundation (TN): www.lyndhurstfoundation.org
NCB Development Corporation: www.ncbdc.org
Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation: www.nrc.org
Spencer Foundation: www.spencer.org

Academic Research Centers
The University of Chicago, Chapin Hall Center for Children: www.chapin.uchicago.edu
Johns Hopkins University and Howard University Center for Students at Risk (CRESPAR): www.csos.jhu/crespar/crespar.html
New York University Institute for Education and Social Policy: www.nyu.edu/iesp
Columbia University, National Center for Children in Poverty: cpmcnet.columbia.edu/dept/nccp
The Civil Rights Project, Harvard University: www.law.harvard.edu/civilrights

Online Publications
Education Organizing (Center for Community Change): www.communitychange.org/education
Education Week: www.edweek.org
School Planning and Management Magazine: www.spmmag.com
Shelterforce (National Housing Institute): www.nhi.org/online/issues.html

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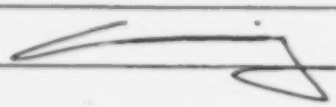
Signature: 	Printed Name/Position/Title: CONNIE CHUNG · AUTHOR
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